

Introduced by Senator Johnston

April 20, 1998

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 89—Relative to
America's Filipino Soldiers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 89, as introduced, Johnston. America's Filipino
Soldiers.

This measure would recognize the heroic deeds of the 1st
and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments, United States Army, as
"California's Own," and supports documentation of their
story in the film "An Untold Triumph: America's Filipino
Soldiers."

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, World War II is the most important period
2 in the history of Filipino-Americans, the time when a war
3 in the Pacific and a great calamity in their homeland
4 brought them together for the most important fight of
5 their lives for America; and

6 WHEREAS, The participation of Filipino-Americans in
7 World War II changed forever the way they see
8 themselves and the way most Americans think of them;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, On December 7, 1941, America was
11 attacked when the Imperial Japanese Naval Forces
12 simultaneously bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, then a
13 territory of the United States, and the Philippines, a

1 commonwealth of the United States; thus, plunging the
2 United States into World War II; and

3 WHEREAS, Because of their unique status as
4 “nationals,” Filipino immigrants in the United States
5 were denied the right to join the United States Armed
6 Forces; and

7 WHEREAS, With the persistence of Filipino Nationals,
8 on January 2, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued
9 an executive order allowing them to serve in the United
10 States Armed Forces in a specially organized fighting
11 unit; and

12 WHEREAS, Filipinos throughout the United States
13 responded to the call to arms, coming from the laboring
14 fields in domestic areas, farms, canneries, factories, and
15 fisheries, thus, giving birth to the 1st Filipino Battalion,
16 United States Army, which was formed at San Luis
17 Obispo, California on April 1, 1942; and

18 WHEREAS, The 1st Filipino Battalion then grew into
19 the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment, United States Army,
20 by July 13, 1942; and

21 WHEREAS, The 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment,
22 United States Army, was formed on October 2, 1942; and

23 WHEREAS, Seven thousand Filipino volunteers were
24 trained in the following California camps: Fort Ord,
25 Hunter Liggett, Camp Beale, Camp Cook, and Camp
26 Kohler; and

27 WHEREAS, Thousands were sworn in as citizens in
28 mass ceremonies in California and were fondly dubbed as
29 “California’s Own”; and

30 WHEREAS, Upon learning of these organized units,
31 the Allied Supreme Commander of the Pacific Far East,
32 General Douglas MacArthur, needing “eyes and ears” in
33 the Philippines, selected 800 men forming the 1st
34 Reconnaissance Battalion (Special Forces) for special
35 training in Australia; and

36 WHEREAS, These men were secreted into the
37 Philippines by submarines and completed more than 280
38 missions to infiltrate enemy lines, collecting and sending
39 vital military data on ship and troop movements, and to

1 train guerrillas in preparation for General MacArthur's
2 return to the Philippines; and

3 WHEREAS, In these endeavors, the casualties for the
4 1st Reconnaissance Battalion were: 164 killed, 6 wounded,
5 178 missing, and 75 captured; and

6 WHEREAS, All members of the 1st Reconnaissance
7 Battalion were awarded the Bronze Star with valor; and

8 WHEREAS, The 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry
9 Regiments, United States Army, arriving in New Guinea
10 for advanced training, were looked upon as a valuable
11 source of specialized soldiers, resulting in more
12 volunteers to other special units of the 6th and 8th Armies
13 for counterintelligence, civil-affairs assignments, and
14 rescue missions, such as the freeing of American prisoners
15 of the infamous "Bataan Death March," who were held
16 captive in Cabanatuan, and carrying out the "Shangri-la
17 Mission," rescuing United States Women Army Corp
18 personnel whose plane was downed in the jungles of New
19 Guinea; and

20 WHEREAS, Other soldiers fought as a unit in cleanup
21 operations in Leyte, Samar, and other islands of the Malay
22 Archipelago; and

23 WHEREAS, Upon the cessation of hostilities, the 2nd
24 Filipino Infantry Regiment was disbanded in Manila, the
25 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (Special Forces) was
26 disbanded in New Guinea, and the 1st Filipino Infantry
27 Regiment was returned to the United States for
28 deactivation in California on April 9, 1946; and

29 WHEREAS, These Filipino war veterans returned
30 home proud to have contributed to the cause of
31 democracy and freedom; and

32 WHEREAS, With the laws on their side as citizens with
33 veterans' rights, and the "GI Bill," these veterans began
34 to forge their lives as citizens, making contributions to
35 their communities and the nation by serving as
36 entrepreneurs, professional and public leaders, and
37 attaining better lives for themselves and their families;
38 and

1 WHEREAS, Those men who returned to the United
2 States with Filipina war brides established a new
3 generation of Filipino families in this country; and

4 WHEREAS, Since very little is known about these
5 veterans, who are now in their 80's and 90's, recognition
6 of their "untold story" should become public to the
7 community and to nation at large; and

8 WHEREAS, To acknowledge their experiences,
9 exploits, and heroic deeds, a 60-minute film documentary
10 is in the making entitled "An Untold Triumph: America's
11 Filipino Soldiers"; and

12 WHEREAS, When completed, the film will become
13 available to the vast television audience and to schools
14 throughout the nation as another example of a great
15 American story; now, therefore, be it

16 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the*
17 *Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislature, in
18 this year of 1998, the celebratory year of the 100th
19 Anniversary of Philippine Independence from Spain and
20 its continued celebration of American-Philippine
21 independence friendship, hereby recognizes the heroic
22 deeds of the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments,
23 United States Army, as "California's Own," and supports
24 documentation of their story in the film "An Untold
25 Triumph: America's Filipino Soldiers"; and be it further

26 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit
27 copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate
28 distribution.

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